

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 742.

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1878.

PRICE 1½d.

STORY OF GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

A PASSING sigh of regret has noted the recent demise, at the good old age of eighty-six, of one of the most remarkable men of our time. Seldom has it been our lot to record in the pages of this *Journal* the story of one whose genius was of so wild and fantastic a character as that of this veteran artist, who won his maiden fame in the days of George III., and has passed away in the latter part of the reign of Queen Victoria.

George Cruikshank, who was of Scotch parentage, was born in London on September 27, 1792. His father was an artist of the caricature order, contemporary with Gilray; and his elder brother Robert was a draughtsman who, though of no great ability, had a strong Cruikshankian manner about him. George began to sketch at a very early age; and at the commencement of the present century he got a living by making etchings for the booksellers. His father had originally intended to train up his son for the stage; but perceiving that his inclinations lay in quite another direction, he allowed him to cultivate those artistic talents which were afterwards to be a source of delight to himself and to the public. In 1805 the lad sketched Lord Nelson's funeral car; and his illustrations of the 'O. P.' riots at Covent Garden Theatre in 1809 attracted considerable attention at the time. Some of his earliest sketches depict characters who were the centre of interest at that period, but whose names have now quite an ancient ring about them.

Before the reign of George III. was over, the young artist had made a conspicuous name as a caricaturist and comic designer. His first designs were in connection with cheap songs and children's books; and after that he furnished political caricatures to the *Scourge* and other satirical publications, besides doing a good deal of work for Mr Hone's books and periodicals during several years. Indeed this famous publisher was the first to perceive the talents of the artist, and to introduce his rather eccentric sketches to the public. It is related of the young Cruikshank that, having

a desire to follow art in the higher department, he endeavoured on one occasion to study at the Academy. The schools at that period were restricted in space and much crowded. On sending up to Fuseli his figure in plaster, the Professor returned the characteristic but discouraging answer: 'He may come, but he will have to fight for a seat.' Cruikshank never repeated his attempt to enter the Academy, although he afterwards became an exhibitor. His pencil was ever enlisted on the side of suffering and against oppression, and it is therefore not surprising to find that the cause of the ill-used Queen Caroline was greatly benefited by its scathing satire. Some special hits were made by the artist on this occasion, for it was a subject on which the public mind was very much excited, and one design which was entitled 'The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder' ran through fifty editions.

In 1830, when the government had determined to suppress the agitation for parliamentary reform, Cruikshank, at the request of his old patron Hone, produced some political illustrations, which are said to have convulsed with laughter the ministry at whom they were directed, and to whom they did incalculable damage. One of these, called 'The Political House that Jack Built,' was particularly good, and within a very short time one hundred thousand copies of it were sold. A few years later George abandoned political caricature and gave himself up to the illustration of works of humour and fancy, to the exposure of passing follies in dress and social manners, and to grave and often tragic moralising on the vices of mankind.

In the year 1821 he illustrated—and indeed originated—the celebrated 'Life in London' of Pierce Egan, a work better known by the title of 'Tom and Jerry.' The book was published in sheets and enjoyed an enormous success, establishing the name of George Cruikshank as the first comic artist of the day. The plates for this work were in *aquatint*, and though not in Cruikshank's best manner, they exhibited that variety of observation and marvellous fullness of

detail for which the designer was always remarkable. The letterpress of the work was, however, written in too free a manner for the moral intention with which the plates were drawn; and offended at the gross use to which his illustrations were applied, the great artist retired from the engagement before the work was completed.

It was related to the writer of this article by Cruikshank himself that, when a very young man, he was one day engaged in hastily sketching a work of rather questionable character. While he was doing it, his mother and another lady entered the room, and he quickly hid the sketch away. The act, however, so disturbed him that he resolved never to allow his pencil to produce any work in the future at which a virtuous woman could not look without a blush. The pure moral tone of all his works attests how well he kept so noble a resolve.

From 1823 down to many years later, George Cruikshank was the most highly esteemed of English book illustrators. Work poured in upon him at a prodigious rate; but being a man of singular energy and tireless industry, he was always equal to the demand. His designs for 'Italian Tales,' 'Grimm's German Stories,' the 'Wild Legend of Peter Schlemihl the Shadowless Man,' 'Baron Munchausen,' and Sir Walter Scott's 'Demonology and Witchcraft,' are amongst his best and highest works. He also illustrated some of Washington Irving's works of fiction, Fielding and Smollett's books, beside Maxwell's graphic history of the 'Irish Rebellion.' It would, however, be impossible, in this brief notice of his life, to mention one tithe of the works that have emanated from the untiring pencil of this remarkable man. But the generation which is passing away cannot fail to remember his celebrated 'Mornings at Bow Street,' a series of sketches which depicted and ruthlessly exposed the dark and savage side of London life.

The genius of Charles Dickens, as we formerly had occasion to remark, received invaluable assistance from Cruikshank's pencil, which illustrated the first writings of the young author, and thus paved the way for him to a larger audience than he might otherwise have had. In the first month of 1837 appeared the opening number of 'Bentley's Miscellany,' edited by 'Boz' (Charles Dickens), then in the flush of his 'Pickwick' success, and illustrated by Cruikshank. In the second number of the 'Miscellany,' Dickens commenced 'Oliver Twist,' a work not only illustrated by Cruikshank, but for which the latter it appears had himself supplied, unwittingly, some of the characters.

George used to say that he had drawn the figures of 'Fagin,' 'Bill Sikes and his Dog,' 'Nancy,' the 'Artful Dodger,' and 'Charley Bates' before 'Oliver Twist' was written; and that Dickens seeing the sketches one day shortly after the commencement of the story, determined to change his plot, and instead of keeping Oliver in the country, resolved to bring him to town, and throw him (with entire innocence) into the company of thieves. 'Fagin' was sketched from a rascally old Jew whom Cruikshank had observed in the neighbourhood of Saffron Hill, and whom he watched and 'studied' for several weeks. The artist had also conceived the terrible face of 'Fagin in the Condemned Cell' as he sits gnawing his nails, in the curious acci-

dental way we lately narrated to our readers. He had been working at the subject for some days without satisfying himself; when sitting up in bed one morning with his hands on his chin and his fingers in his mouth, he saw his face in the glass, and at once exclaimed: 'That's it! that's the face I want!'

Nobody who has seen the sketches to 'Oliver Twist' can ever forget them, and two at least of the series are perfect *chefs-d'œuvre* of genius, namely the death of Sikes on the roof of the old house at the river-side, and the despair of Fagin in his cell. In fact some of Cruikshank's best work in the delineation of low and depraved life and the squalid picturesqueness of criminal haunts, appeared in the above-named book. His illustrations to Harrison Ainsworth's works were also for the most part charming specimens of what may be appropriately termed the 'Cruikshankian' art. At the same time he sketched the designs for some of the 'Ingoldsby Legends' as they appeared from time to time in the 'Miscellany.' In 1841 he set up on his own account a monthly periodical called the 'Omnibus,' of which Laman Blanchard was the editor; and subsequently joined Mr Ainsworth in the magazine which that gentleman had started in his own name; the great artist, in a series of splendid plates of the highest conception, illustrating the 'Miser's Daughter' and other works from the pen of the proprietor. For several years Cruikshank had been publishing a 'Comic Almanac,' which was a great favourite with the public, and was always brimming full of fun and prodigal invention. In 1863 a 'Cruikshank Gallery' was opened at Exeter Hall, in which were exhibited a great number of his works, extending over a period of sixty years. The exhibition originated from a desire on the artist's part to shew the public that they were all done by the same hand, and that he was not, in fact, *his own grandfather*; some people having asserted that the author of his later works was the grandson of the man who had sketched the earliest ones.

He will perhaps be remembered most affectionately by the great industrial portion of the people as the apostle as well as the artist of temperance. Perceiving drunkenness to be the national vice, he depicted its horrors from the studio, and denounced its woes from the platform. It was about the year 1845 that he joined the teetotalers; and in 1847 he brought out a set of plates called 'The Bottle,' a kind of 'Drunkard's Progress,' in eight designs, executed in glypography with remarkable power and tragic intensity, not unlike some of the works of Hogarth. The success of these extraordinary engravings was enormous. Dramas were founded on the story at the minor theatres, and the several tableaux were reproduced on the stage. He soon published a sequel to 'The Bottle,' and did a great deal of work for the temperance societies; but it was observed that his style suffered somewhat by the contraction of his ideas and sympathies, and his reputation declined amongst the general public in proportion to the increase of his popularity amongst the teetotalers. He remained, however, the staunch friend and ally of the temperance leaders up to the day of his death; and he used to say that for years before he became a total abstainer he was the enemy of drunkenness with his pencil, but that

later experience had taught him that precept without example was of little avail. There is no doubt that, though the good he was able to do by persuading others to whom drink was a positive injury, brought great satisfaction to his mind, it alienated from him to a great extent the friendship, to their loss, of his former companions. But to know his duty was for George Cruikshank to do it, and nobly did he stand by the cause which he had espoused. His advocacy of temperance is also said to have been a great pecuniary loss to him; and the writer of this article remembers having heard him say, a few years since, that he had lost a commission to paint the portrait of a nobleman, because somebody had told the latter that since George Cruikshank had become a teetotaler he had lost all his talent! The hearty laugh which accompanied the recital of the story rings in the writer's ears still.

Perhaps his greatest work in the cause of temperance, as it is certainly his most extraordinary one, is the large oil-painting called 'The Worship of Bacchus,' which now hangs in the National Gallery. It represents the various phases of our national drinking system, from the child in its cradle to the man's descent to the grave. There are many hundreds of figures depicted on the canvas, engaged in all the different customs of so-called civilised life; and the sad lesson it reads is well deserving the attention of all who love their country, and would prefer to witness its increased prosperity rather than its decline. Cruikshank had the honour of describing the picture to Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor in 1863; and since then it has been exhibited in all the principal towns and cities of the United Kingdom. Finally, it was presented by the teetotalers to the nation, having been purchased from the artist by means of a subscription. The time spent in the preparation of this work must have been very great, indeed it might well have been the study of an ordinary lifetime. An engraving of the picture was published some time ago, in which all the figures were outlined by the painter and finished by Mr Mottram.

In his own way, George Cruikshank was a philanthropist, and to the end of his life it was his proud boast that he put a stop to hanging for forging bank-notes. The story, as told by himself, is so interesting, that we need not apologise for placing it before our readers. He lived in Salisbury Square, Fleet Street; and on his returning from the Bank of England one morning he was horrified at seeing several persons, two of whom were women, hanging on the gibbet in front of Newgate. On his making inquiries as to the nature of their crime, he was told that they had been put to death for forging one-pound Bank of England notes. The fact that a poor woman could be put to death for such a minor offence had such an effect upon him, that he hurried home, determined, if possible, to put a stop to such wholesale destruction of life.

Cruikshank was well acquainted with the habits of the low class of society in London at that time, as it had been necessary for him to study them in the furtherance of his art, and he knew well that it was most likely that the poor women in question were simply the unconscious instruments of the miscreants who forged the notes, and had been induced by them to tender the false money to some

publican or other. In a few minutes after his arrival at his residence he had designed and sketched a 'Bank-note not to be Imitated.' Shortly afterwards, William Hone the publisher called on him, and seeing the sketch lying on the table, he was much struck with it.

'What are you going to do with this, George?' he asked.

'To publish it,' replied the artist.

'Will you let me have it?' inquired Hone.

'Willingly,' said Cruikshank; and making an etching of it there and then, he gave it to Hone, and it was published; the result being, that 'I had the satisfaction of knowing that no man or woman was ever hanged afterwards for passing forged one-pound Bank of England notes.'

In 1863 he published an amusing pamphlet against the belief in ghosts, illustrated by some weird fantastic sketches on wood. But his public appearances now became less frequent. During the later years of his life he gave considerable attention to oil-painting, and he used greatly to regret that he had not received a more artistic education, stating that when he first saw the cartoons of Raphael he felt overpowered by a sort of shame at his own comparative deficiencies. He has, however, left some good specimens of his power in oil in 'Tam o' Shanter,' 'A Runaway Knock,' and 'Disturbing the Congregation;' the last-named having been bought by the late Prince Consort, and afterwards engraved. The design of the Bruce Memorial, which has been so much admired, was also from the pencil of George Cruikshank; and the last contribution from his pen to the public press was a letter on this subject.

His personal appearance was no less remarkable than his works. Rather below middle stature, and thick-set, with a rather sharp Roman nose, piercing eyes, a mouth full of lurking humour, and wild elf-locks flowing about his face, he at once attracted attention as a man of genius, energy, and character. He was always famous for great courage and spirit, which added to his muscular power, made him very capable of holding his own everywhere.

Though accustomed to depict life in its shadier phases, Cruikshank was of a naturally joyous disposition. In social life his humour was inimitable; and his readiness to add to the amusement of his host and his host's guests was only equalled by the unique way in which he played the part of actor, singer, and dancer. The fact of his being a teetotaler in no way interfered with his honest natural merry nature; with old and young alike he was a deserved favourite. Young folks were especially fond of the dear old man. Dining with some other guests at the London house of a friend of the writer's some five-and-twenty years ago, Mr Cruikshank, when asked to favour the company with a song, struck up the comic ditty of *Billy Taylor*, that brisk young fellow, and danced an accompaniment, much to the amusement of the good folks present. 'Not so bad for one of your teetotalers,' quoth the veteran as he returned to his seat.

In his earlier years he ventured alone into the worst dens of criminal London, and since he had grown old he actually captured a burglar in his own house and with his own hands. In many ways he contributed to the public amusement and

the public good; and during the later years of his life he was in receipt of a government pension, for though he helped to make fortunes for others, he made very little money for himself. He was a Volunteer so far back as 1804; and in our own days he commanded a regiment of citizen soldiers of teetotal principles.

There is on view at the Westminster Aquarium at the present time a splendid collection of Cruikshank's works, each of which is a study in itself, while the whole, consisting of about five hundred sketches, forms a unique monument to his skill and genius.

As an artist he will be certain of lasting fame, for he managed his lights and shades with a skill akin to Rembrandt, while his delineation of low life in its every phase was marvellous. His illustrations to fairy and goblin stories were also beyond praise, as they could not be surpassed in strangeness and elfin oddity; and in this respect he was popular with young and old. His sketches must be innumerable, for he was, like all true men of genius, a great worker, and he must have toiled unceasingly through at least seventy years of his long life. He was attacked with bronchitis a few weeks previous to his death, yet with great care he was actually enabled to recover from this disease; but alas! only to succumb to an older complaint from which he had been free for years. He died painlessly, on the evening of the first of February last, at his residence in Hampstead Road, London; and while to comparatively few was given the inestimable privilege of the great artist's friendship, the grief of a nation for his loss attests the universality of his fame.

HELENA, LADY HARROGATE.

CHAPTER XV.—THE STOLEN LETTER.

JASPER DENZIL, his arm, bruised and crushed as it had been beneath the weight of the fallen horse, still needing the support of a sling, and his pallid cheek and dim eye telling that he had not wholly regained his strength, lounged among the cushions of a sofa in what was called the White Room at Carbery. This room, which owed its name to the colour of its panelled walls, sparsely relieved by mouldings of gold and pale blue, overlooked the park and adjoined the billiard-room; and Jasper, with an invalid's caprice, had chosen it for his especial apartment during the period of his compulsory confinement to the house.

Time hung more heavily than ever on the captain's hands since his accident had cut him off from his ordinary habits of life. Of intellectual resources he had few indeed, being one of those men (and they are numerous amongst us) to whom reading is a weariness of spirit, and thinking a laborious mental process, and who undergo tortures of boredom when thrown helpless into that worst of all company—their own. His sisters' affection, his sisters' innocent anxiety to anticipate his wishes and soothe his pain, bored him more than it touched him. He was not of a tender moral fibre, and barely tolerated at best those of his own blood and name. He would very much have preferred as a nurse bluff Jack Prodgors, to Blanche and Lucy. With Prodgors he had topics and interests in common; the minds of the two captains ran nearly in identical grooves; whereas

his sisters did not fathom his nature or partake his tastes. So dreary was the existence to which this once brilliant cavalry officer was now condemned, that he had actually come to look forward with a sort of languid excitement to the professional visits of little Dr Aulhus from Pebworth, whose gig, to the great disgust of Mr Lancetter, the High Tor surgeon, was daily to be seen traversing the carriage-drive of Carbery Chase. With his father, Jasper's dealings were coldly decorous, no fondness and no trust existing on either side. Sir Sykes had announced to Jasper that his debts—of which the baronet, through a chance interview with Mr Wilkins the attorney from London, had been made aware—had been paid in full.

'I must ask you, Jasper,' Sir Sykes had said, 'for two assurances: one to the effect that no more secret liabilities exist to start up at unexpected moments; and the other, that you will never again ride a steeplechase.'

'For my own sake, sir, I'll promise you that last willingly enough,' said Jasper, with a sickly smile. 'I didn't use to mind that kind of thing; but I suppose I am not so young in constitution as I was, and don't come up to time so readily. And as for more snakes in the grass, such as those which that impudent cur Wilkins wheedled me into signing, for his own benefit and that of his worthy allies, I give you my word there's not one. Some fresh tailor or liverman may send a bill in one day. A gentleman can't always be quite sure as to how many new coats and hired broughams may be totted up against him by those harpies at the West End; but that is all. I should have won a hatful of money the other day if anybody but Hanger had been on The Smasher's back, when that savage brute rushed at the wall; but I don't owe any, except a hundred and fifty which Prodgors lent me, and every farthing of which I paid to the bookmakers before the race, in hope of receiving it back with a tidy sum to boot.'

Sir Sykes had forthwith inclosed a cheque for a hundred and fifty pounds to Captain Prodgors, with a very frigid acknowledgment of the accommodation offered to his son.

'I could wish that you had other friends, other pursuits too,' he said coldly to Jasper. 'However, I will not lecture. You are of an age to select your own associates.'

Captain Denzil then, being on terms of chilling civility with his father, and an uncongenial companion for his sisters, yielded himself the more readily to the singular fascination which Ruth Willis could, when she chose, exert. Sir Sykes's ward had a remarkable power of pleasing when it suited her to please. She had at the first conciliated the servants at Carbery—no slight feat, considering the dull weight of stolid prejudices which she had to encounter—and had won the regard of the baronet's two daughters. Then Lucy and Blanche had felt the ardour of their early girlish friendship for the Indian orphan cool perceptibly, perhaps because the latter no longer gave herself the same pains to win their suffrages. And now she laid herself out to be agreeable to Jasper. Nothing could be more natural or befitting than that a young lady, under deep obligations to the master of the house, should shew her gratitude by doing little acts of kindness to her guardian's son when a prisoner; and without any apparent effort or design, Ruth seemed to appropriate the invalid

as her own. She talked to him—she was by far better informed than the average of her sex and age, and had a rare tact which taught her when to speak, and of what—and she read to him. A more fastidious listener than Jasper might have been charmed with that sweet untiring voice, so admirably modulated that it assumed the tone most suited to the subject-matter, be it what it might. The captain, whose boast it was, that with the exception of racing calendars and cavalry manuals, he had not opened a book since he left school, cared for nothing but newspapers, and especially newspapers of a sporting turn, and such literature is not generally very inviting to a feminine student; but Miss Willis shewed no symptoms of weariness as she retailed to her hearer the cream of the turf intelligence.

‘I don’t half like her. There are times when I could almost say, I hate her!’ thought Jasper to himself once and again; ‘but she’s clever, and has something about her which I don’t understand, for she never bores a fellow.’

It was a burning day in early August. The windows of the White Room were open, and the heavy hum of the bees, as they loaded themselves with the plunder of the blossoms that clustered so thickly without, had in itself a drowsy potency. Jasper, overcome by heat and lassitude, had fallen asleep among his cushions, and Ruth Willis, who had been reading to him, laid down the paper and slipped softly from the room, closing the door behind her. She met no one, either on her way to her own chamber or as, having donned her garden hat and jacket, she descended the stairs. It was her practice on most fine days to leave the house for a solitary ramble either in the park or among the woods that sloped down to the river.

It was Ruth’s custom, when thus she sallied forth alone, to take with her a book, which she could read when seated on some granite boulder against which the swift stream chafed in vain, or amidst the gnarled roots of the ancient trees in the Chase. Nor did she, like the majority of young ladies, consider nothing worth her study save the contents of the last green box of novels from a London circulating library, preferring often the perusal of the quaint pretty old books that are usually allowed to sleep unmolested on their shelves, here the verses of a forgotten poet, there perhaps some idyl unsurpassed in its simple sweetness of thought and diction.

With works of this description, well chosen once but now voted obsolete, the library at Carbery Chase was richly stored; and Sir Sykes had willingly given to his ward the permission which she asked, to have free access to its treasures. He himself spent most of his time while within doors in this same library, and there Ruth fully expected to find him, when she entered it, accoutred for her walk. She had in her hand a tiny tome, bound in tawny leather, and with a faded coat of arms, on which might still be deciphered the De Vere wyverns stamped upon the cover. To replace this and to select another volume, she should have to pass Sir Sykes’s writing-table, in front of the great stained glass window; but he would merely look up with a nod and smile as the small slender form of his ward flitted by.

Sir Sykes, however, contrary to his habit at that hour, was not in the library. He must but

recently have quitted it, however, for the ink in the pen that he had laid aside was yet wet, and the note which he had been engaged in writing was unfinished. On a desk which occupied the right-hand corner of the writing-table, a large old desk, the queer inlaid-work of which, in ivory and tortoise-shell, had probably been that of some Chinese or Hindu mechanic, lay an open letter, the bluish paper and formal penmanship of which suggested the idea of business. Now, it may seem trite to say that a regard for the sanctity of another person’s correspondence is not merely innate in every honourable mind, but so strongly inculcated upon us by education and example, that there are many who are capable of actual crime, yet who would be degraded in their own esteem by any prying into what was meant to meet no eyes but those of the legitimate recipient. Yet Ruth Willis, the instant that she perceived herself to be alone in the room, unhesitatingly drew near to the table and took a brief survey of what lay upon it. As she caught a glimpse of the letter, her very breathing seemed to stop, and a strange glittering light came into her large eyes, and a crimson flush mantled in her pale cheek.

‘I must have it!’ she exclaimed passionately. ‘At any risk I must know all, must realise the extent of the danger, and whence it threatens. There is not a moment to lose!’

Quick as thought the girl snatched up the letter from the desk on which it lay, and darted towards the French window nearest to the now empty fire-place. The window stood open. As she neared it, she heard a man’s tread in the passage, a man’s hand upon the door of the library. To avoid detection, her only chance was in her own promptitude and coolness. She had but just time to pass through the opening and to conceal herself among the rose-trees and flowering shrubs, before Sir Sykes entered the room that she had so lately left. She thrust the letter into her pocket and cowered down close to the wall, terror in her eyes and quick-moving lips, for she knew but too well that in such a case as this no social subterfuge, no fair seeming excuse could avail her.

From her lair among the fragrant bushes Ruth could see the baronet tossing over the papers that lay neatly arranged on his table, then hurrying to and fro in evident excitement. That he was seeking for the missing letter was clear.

‘Sooner or later,’ she murmured to herself, ‘he must remember the window, and should he but see me, all is lost. In such a plight, boldness is safest.’

With a stealthy swiftness which had something feline in it, Ruth Willis made her way past shrubs and sheltering trees and black hedges of aged yew, trimmed, for generations past, by the gardener’s shears. There were men at work among the lawns and flower-beds, men at work too among the hot-houses and conservatories. It would not be well, should suspicion be rife and inquiry active, that these men should have seen her. There was one place, however, where the trees of the garden overhung the fence dividing it from the park, and here there was a wicket, seldom used. To reach it she had to traverse one short stretch of greensward exposed to the observation of the under-gardeners at their work. Watching for a favourable moment, Ruth glided across the dangerous piece of open ground, unseen by those who were busy at that

mowing and rolling, and weeding and pruning, which never seems to be finished in a rich man's pleasure. With the speed of a hunted deer she threaded her way amidst the trees, opened the gate, and skirting the southern angle of the park, fled through the new plantations to her favourite resort, the woods beside the river.

No more peaceful and few prettier spots could easily have been found than that which Ruth now sought, a place where the swift stream, rushing down from its birthplace among the Dartmoor heights to end its short career in the blue sea—of which, between the interlacing boughs, a view could here and there be obtained—brawled among the red rocks that half choked up the deep and narrow ravine. A welcome coolness seemed to arise from where the spray of the pellucid water was sprinkled over boulders worn smooth by time; and clefts where the delicate lady-fern and many another dainty frond grew thickly. But Ruth Willis for once was blind to the beauty of the scene, deaf to the silvery music of the stream among the pebbles or to the carol of the birds. With dilated eyes and lips compressed, but with trembling fingers, she drew forth the stolen letter, and beneath the shadow of the overhanging boughs, eagerly, almost fiercely, read and re-read the words that it contained.

FIRES IN AMERICA.

THE exceeding dryness of the atmosphere in the United States produces such an inflammability in buildings, that when a fire breaks out it proceeds with surprising velocity. Owing to this circumstance Americans have organised the most perfect system in the world of extinguishing fires, though all their efforts are often in vain. A stranger in New York or Boston would be astonished at the immense uproar caused by an outbreak of fire. Bells are rung, gongs sounded, and steam fire-engines rush along the streets regardless of everything. The unaccustomed stranger is apt to make a run of it when he sees the engines coming; the American simply steps on to the 'side-walk' or into a 'store' for a moment. It is provided by the city government that 'the officers and men, with their teams and apparatus, shall have the right of way while going to a fire, through any street, lane, or alley,' &c.; and most unreservedly do the said officers and men make use of this permission. If any old woman's stall is at the corner of a street round which the steamers must go, there is no help for it; over it goes. If a buggy is left standing at a corner, the owner must not be surprised if but three wheels are left on it when he returns. Accidents of this latter kind, however, are rare; people recognise and yield willingly the right of way; and the quicker the engines go to a fire, the better pleased everybody is. It is quite a point of rivalry among the firemen who shall get the first water on a fire, and is mentioned always in the report of the engineer.

This is how it looks from the outside; but the greater part of those who see the engines go to a fire have no idea of the inner working of the system. All they know is that when there is a fire the engines go and put it out. We shall

therefore now proceed to shew, first, the means for communicating alarms of fire; and second, the means for extinguishing fires when discovered.

There are in Boston (Mass.), which we may take as an example of a well-protected city, about two hundred and thirty-five alarm-boxes, which are small iron boxes placed at street corners, on public buildings, and in any convenient and necessary locality. Each box is connected by two wires with the head office at the City Hall, and has its number painted in red, and a notice stating where the key is kept, which is generally the nearest house. The authorities usually confide the key to some person whose premises are open all night, such as the proprietor of an hotel, an apothecary, or a doctor. When the box is opened, nothing is seen but a small hook at the top, the interior being concealed by another iron lid. Under this second lid is a steel cylinder with pieces of ebony let into its circumference to correspond with the number of the box. This cylinder is connected with one of the telegraph wires; and a steel spring which presses against it, with the other. When the hook is pulled down a clock-work arrangement causes the cylinder to revolve four times; the steel spring consequently passes over the entire surface of the cylinder four times, and contact is broken at the points where the spring touches only the non-conducting ebony. For instance, if the circumference of the cylinder in box 125 could be unrolled, it would present an appearance something like this: I II III. Let us now follow the wires to the top of the City Hall, where, night and day, sits an operator watching the recording instrument. Here in a small room are numerous electrical instruments of all sorts, gongs, switches, keys, levers, and wires. In an attic overhead are the batteries. As soon as a box is opened and 'pulled' a bell strikes, and a recording instrument in front turns out a slip of paper, on which is printed the box number; thus

would mean box 125. It prints this four times—the number of revolutions made by the cylinder in the box—to avoid any error.

On the other side of the operator are three clock faces bearing numerals from one to nine, and a pointer. The one to the right is for the units, the middle one for the tens, the one to the left for the hundreds. Under them is a lever working horizontally. Immediately the operator receives the box number, he sets these pointers to correspond with it—namely, the left one he puts at 1, the middle at 2, the right one at 5—thus making 125—and then moves the lever underneath.

Now let us see what is the result of this manœuvring. Wires connect these machines with various church bells and gongs in all parts of the city, which ring out the alarm as the operator moves the lever. There are thirty-eight such bells in Boston. When there is a church bell in the neighbourhood, the fire department affixes an electrical hammer to it; if, however, there is no public bell in the right place, a large gong is erected. The machine at City Hall is automatic when once started, and causes the bells to sound the alarm three times as follows. For box 125 they would strike once; then a pause and strike twice; another pause and strike five times; then a much longer pause and repeat twice. For box 218 they strike

2—1—8, always sounding the number three times with intervals between. So quickly is all this managed that in half a minute after a person opens and 'pulls' a box he hears the bells begin to respond.

In case that the engines which go on the first alarm are not sufficiently numerous to extinguish the fire, a second alarm is given by the operator striking ten blows on the bells, which brings several more engines. If the fire is very serious, a third alarm brings still more engines with hose and ladder companies. This is given by striking twelve blows twice. If the conflagration is becoming very serious indeed, the entire fire department is summoned by striking twelve blows three times. This, of course, very rarely happens. Indeed so efficient are the men and apparatus, that even a second alarm is quite unusual. The second and third alarms are communicated to the City Hall operator by simply 'pulling' the same box a second and third time; or if the pulling apparatus should have been destroyed at an early stage of the fire, by transmitting a request by a Morse telegraph key, which is placed in every box for the use of the employees when out testing the circuits. Every one knows the number of the box situated near to his residence or place of business; so, if awakened by the bells in the night, he simply counts the box number, and if it is not near him, turns over and goes to sleep again reassured; whilst if it chance to be his number, he is at once ready to render any assistance.

The fire telegraph is also made use of by the city authorities for calling out the police or the military in case of a disturbance, and also for informing the parents who send their children to the public schools when there is to be no class, on account of bad weather or other reasons. Each of these circumstances has its special number. There is also a gong placed in every police station, which is struck directly from the boxes, and it frequently happens that the police have a flaming building barricaded by a rope, before the engines arrive.

Next, the means for extinguishing fires when discovered. In the city of Boston there are twenty-nine steam fire-engines in actual service, and seven held in reserve; eight chemical engines, throwing water impregnated with soda and sulphuric acid, which also serves as the motive-power; one steam self-propelling engine; one fire-boat to defend the water-front of the city; nearly forty hose carriages, about seventy thousand feet of hose, and twelve hook and ladder companies; besides other apparatus of various kinds, such as hand-engines, coal-wagons, sleighs for carrying the hose in winter, and several aerial ladders. The engines weigh from seven to nine thousand pounds, and cost about a thousand pounds each.

One of the most interesting features in the American fire-system is the extreme ingenuity that is exercised to insure the speedy arrival of the apparatus at a fire. As has been said, in less than a minute after the alarm-box has been pulled the bells are ringing out the alarm all over the city; and—credible as it may seem—sometimes in ten seconds after the alarm is rung, the engines have left their stations with steam up and every one prepared for work! Perhaps the best way to give a general idea of how this wonderful celerity

is attained is to describe the interior arrangements of an engine-house.

Usually an engine and a hose-carriage are kept in one house. This is a two-story building with a small tower or look-out. In the cellar are kept the steam-heaters and coal; on the first floor in front are the engine and hose-carriage, at the back the stables; on the second floor the sleeping-room of the men, their smoking and reading room, and a small tool-shop. There is a sort of wooden tunnel running up by the side of the stairs from the cellar to the top of the house, in which are hung the lengths of spare hose. In the front of the building is a large gateway, kept closed, for the entrance and exit of the engine. The engine stands facing the door, and by the side of it the hose-carriage. The firemen's helmets and coats are hung on these; and in the engine the materials for getting up the fire are laid at the bottom; and close by is a sort of tow-torch soaked in oil, which is lighted and thrown on the fire by the engineman when they start. So inflammable is the material laid in the engine-furnace that the fire is lighted instantaneously. Coming up through the floor, and connecting with two pipes at the rear of the engine, are two tubes from the steam-heater mentioned above. This is simply a small boiler by which the boiler of the fire-engine is kept filled night and day with hot water, so that steam is up immediately after the fire is lighted. By the side of the engine is a large gong, on which the alarm is sounded by the same current that causes the strokes on the bells outside. Under this is a lever holding back a powerful spring, which, when released, opens the stable-doors without any attention from the firemen!

There are three horses—two for the engine, and one for the hose-carriage. They are kept in small stalls, and face the door of the house, with the door of the stall just in front of them, so that when the door is opened, the horses, on stepping out, stand by the side of the engine in readiness to be harnessed. And not only this, but the horses, without exception, are so well trained, that the instant the door is opened they run out and stand by the side of the engine-pole. They are always completely harnessed, and their harness is so constructed that in order to attach them to the engine only the joining of a few snap-hooks is necessary.

One fireman is always on patrol on the 'floor,' whose duty it is to count and register the alarm; another is on patrol in the neighbourhood. They sleep with everything on but their coat and boots, and each has a distinct place assigned to him, which he takes on the striking of an alarm. So the gong strikes, the stable-doors open, the horses rush out, the men tumble down-stairs from their rooms above, the horses are harnessed; and if the alarm calls for them, the doors are thrown open, and they are gone, occasionally, as was said, in ten or twelve seconds from the striking of the alarm.

The city of Boston is divided into ten fire districts, and each district placed under the charge of an assistant-engineer. Usually about five or six engines, with their accompanying hose-carriages, two hook and ladder companies, a coal-wagon, and one of the wagons of the protective brigade—carrying tarpaulins and rubber blankets, to protect property from injury by water, supported by the insurance companies—go to every fire. The entire force of the Fire department in 1876 was

six hundred and sixty-seven men, controlled by three fire commissioners, one nominated by the mayor, and confirmed by the city council every year.

Such are the means possessed by a city of rather more than four hundred thousand inhabitants for protection against fire; and with such a splendid system and such a force of men and machines, it is difficult to understand how a fire could attain such awful proportions as that of 1872, when the loss amounted to four millions sterling.

Boston always took great pride and felt much confidence in her granite-fronted places of business, but her recent fire has relieved her of that misplaced confidence. The blocks of granite crumbled away, cracked and fell apart, and even exploded. Of course this was an exceptionally great heat, but one sees fewer warehouses fronted with granite now than before the fire.

Even during so terrible a calamity as this fire the characteristic wit of the American did not desert him. No sooner were the flames extinguished in the burnt district, than the occupiers of the premises put up notices on their lots stating their present residences and future plans. Usually, in the larger cities of the United States, a value is put upon time of which we have no conception in England. When a house is burnt down in London or Edinburgh, half a year may elapse before arrangements are made to build it up again. On the morning after a fire in New York, we were amused in observing that workmen were already engaged in preparations for a new building. Owing to this species of energy in the American people, the two half-destroyed cities of Boston and Chicago are built up again, handsomer and stronger than ever. And still the work of improving the fire department goes on. There are in the newspapers almost daily accounts of the trial of new engines, improved ladders, longer fire-escapes, and surer fire-extinguishing compounds, and nothing is spared in checking the tyranny of what has been so aptly termed a 'good servant but bad master.'

MONSIEUR HOULOT.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.—YESTERDAY—BONDAGE.

I was sitting one day looking disconsolately out of window at a landscape almost blotted out by rain and mist, a landscape almost hatefully familiar to me. My mind was as cheerless as the prospect, as blank as the sheet of paper stretched before me to receive its impressions. I looked on that sheet of paper with disgust, with loathing. There was no idea in my head, and I felt that anything I might attempt to write would turn out meaningless verbiage. But my invisible task-masters were behind me—I heard the crack of their many-thonged whips—I saw Messrs Butcher and Baker sitting joyfully on the car which was destined to crush me if I once slackened the rope.

Yes, I was a writer; neither a successful one nor the reverse. I made a living by it, but it was an irregular living. Sometimes I was comparatively rich, at others I was superlatively poor. At the date of which I write I was decidedly in the latter condition. In purse and in health I was at the lowest of low-water; one reacted on

the other; my poverty increased my physical weakness, which in its turn prevented any effective effort to fill the exchequer. Everything I wrote somehow missed fire. A rest and a change might have set me up. I had no means of taking either. Nor was I the only sufferer in the house. My wife was ill and depressed; the children were out of health. Everything was out of gear.

Under these doleful conditions I was sitting in a sort of comatose state, brooding over all the uncomfortable possibilities of existence or non-existence—without a friend to take counsel with, or even an acquaintance who might help to move the stagnant waters of life—when I was aroused by the unwonted sound of wheels. A fly drove up to the gate, horse and driver shivering and dripping with wet. The man jumped down and rang the bell. The servant brought up a card: 'Mrs Collingwood Dawson.'

I knew the name well enough. Dawson was a successful writer of fiction, a man whose novels were in demand at all the circulating libraries. But what could his better-half want with me? Time would shew. The lady entered.

Mrs Collingwood Dawson was a pleasant-looking woman of uncertain age, not much over thirty probably, and certainly under forty, with dark luminous eyes and an expressive face.

'It is rather bold of me,' she said, 'to come here and take you by storm, without introduction or anything. I can only plead the fellowship of the craft.'

I replied in an embarrassed way with some meaningless commonplace; and after a few preliminary civilities, she came to the real purpose of her visit.

'My husband is,' she said, 'a very ill-used man. Everybody is worrying him to write this and that and the other. If he had a dozen pairs of hands he could keep them going. Unfortunately, he is a sad invalid, and is really incapable of undertaking more than the little he has in hand.'

I expressed a decent grief at the ill-health of Mr Collingwood Dawson.

'I have long been urging him,' she went on, 'to take a partner, a coadjutor, a *collaborateur*, some one who will relieve him from the laborious part of the business, who will work in his style and on his ideas, and whose work should in effect be his, and appear under his name.'

'You will have difficulty,' said I, 'in finding a competent person who would be willing to sacrifice his literary identity.'

'Yes; there is a difficulty certainly; but I have taken the liberty of hoping that you would help us to obviate it. You are yet young comparatively, and have ample time hereafter to gather a crop of bays on your own account.'

'What induced you, madam, to think of me in the matter?'

'Simply a study of what you have written, the style of which seemed suitable to our purpose. If I am offending you, say so, and I will apologise, and go no further.'

I replied that I was willing to hear her offer; that I had no opinion of literary partnerships, but that my means would not allow me to reject point-blank any advantageous proposal.

'There is nothing derogatory at all, you will acknowledge, in working on other people's lines; the greatest authors have done it.'

'Oh, if I can do it honestly, I shall have no scruples on any other score.'

'Is there any difference between working for us and say for a magazine which publishes your work anonymously? Or in writing under a *nom de plume*. If there is any deceit in the matter, it rests with us, not with you. But if it be a deceit, then all the old masters were cheats, when they sold as their own, pictures which were in parts done by their scholars, or sculptors who sell as their work, statues of which all the rough work has been done by pupils or workmen. No, indeed; it is your own pride that stands in the way. And pride you know is a sin, and ought to be repented of.'

'Well,' I said, 'let me hear the terms.'

The terms were liberal enough. A certain sum per sheet at a higher rate than I could earn elsewhere, and with the certainty of a market for all I wrote, which at that time I did not possess. But the bait which finally took me was the offer of an immediate cheque for fifty pounds on account and to bind the transaction.

I took counsel of my wife.

'Can you hesitate?' she said. 'Here we hardly know where to look for to-morrow's food, and you are offered a certain income and fifty pounds as earnest-money.'

I closed with the offer and accepted the retaining fee; and I felt as Dr Faustus might have done when he sold his soul to the Evil One.

Mrs Collingwood Dawson seemed pleased at my compliance, and sketched out to me the part she wished me to take. We were to manufacture novels solely—about three a year. The plot was to be drawn out for me with indications of the points to be worked out. I was to fill in dialogue and description. The 'author' was to be at liberty to add, cut out, amend, and put in finishing touches.

'I shall give you,' she said, 'a packet which I have left in the fly, containing the various works of my husband. Read them over critically, and adapt your style to his. I know you are a skilful workman, and will have no difficulty in the matter.'

Business over, my employer joined our family dinner. She was bright and cheerful, and her gaiety was infectious. My wife was charmed with her; the children could not make enough of her. Her presence had all the effect upon me of sparkling wine. When she was gone, I sat down to read Mr Dawson's works with as little appetite for their perusal as a grocer has for figs. But I was surprised to find that though uneven in quality and often carelessly written, there were abundant traces of a vivid imagination, and an intimate knowledge of the workings of the human heart in morbid and unhealthy developments. These qualities, I may say, appeared only by fits and starts, and were overlaid by a good deal of very commonplace work. The strong point of his fiction, and that which gained, no doubt, the approval of the public, was the plot. His plots were always ingenious and well combined, and kept the interest going to the very fall of the curtain.

Time passed on. I got fairly to work on my new business. I had no fault to find with my employers, and they on their part seemed well satisfied with my services. I had as much work as

I could manage; but I found it much easier than of old, inasmuch as I had definite lines to work upon and a distinct object in view. Then the payment was regular, and in virtue of that, our household assumed an aspect of comfort and tranquillity to which it had long been a stranger. As it was no longer necessary for me to live within reach of London, I determined to carry out a plan that had been in my head for some time, and settle for a while in some quiet place in Normandy, where one could have good air, repose, and tranquillity, without the appalling dullness that mantles over an English country town.

All this time I had never seen Mr Collingwood Dawson, and the only address I knew was at his chambers in the Temple; but all business matters were arranged with a Mr Smith, who, I understood, was his agent. My removal involved only a trifling extra cost in postage, and I had work on hand that would keep me going for several months.

We settled in a pleasant picturesque little town on the banks of the Seine, and after giving myself a few weeks' holiday, to make acquaintance with the neighbourhood, I began to plod on steadily at my task.

I had just despatched a parcel of manuscript, and was strolling homewards from the post-office along the quay, when I stopped to watch some people fishing from the steps that lead down to the water-side. The tide was low, the evening tranquil. The setting sun was blinking over the edge of the wood-crowned heights behind; but all this side of the view was in shadow, while the aspens and poplars on the further bank were glowing in golden light. A little brook that escapes into the river hereabouts through a conduit of stone was splashing and bubbling merrily. In the eddy formed by the brook and the big river were swimming the light floats of the fishermen, every now and then pulled down, more often by some drowning weed or twig, but sometimes by a fish, whose eager darts from side to side, and struggles as it was hauled in by main force, afforded great amusement and excitement to some half-dozen boys.

A more than commonly vigorous pluck at one of the floats, and a strenuous tug at the line belonging to it, which made the rod curve and wave under its strain, shewed that a big fish had been hooked. The sensation among the spectators was great. It is always an awkward matter to land a fish of any size when the river-bank is perpendicular and there is no landing-net. Our friends here, however, were not disposed to create unnecessary difficulties. A companion of the successful fisherman seized the line and began to haul it in hand over hand. It is a capital way this if everything holds and the fish is hooked beyond possibility of release. In this case, however, although the line was pulled in vigorously, all of a sudden the resistance ceased and the hook came naked home. The baffled fisherman bowed and smiled politely at his friend. It was a little *contre-temps* inseparable from the amusement of fishing.

'Clumsy!' growled a voice close to my elbow in good English. I turned round quite startled, for there were no English residents in the town, and the accents of my native tongue were becoming unfamiliar. A man stood by my side of somewhat

strange appearance. He was short and thick-set, and had a massive strongly marked face, with bushy overhanging eyebrows, a heavy gray moustache, and stubbly beard of only a few weeks' growth. His arms were folded, the left one over the other; but as he changed his position, I saw that he had lost his right hand, and that its place was supplied with an iron hook. He was dressed in a blouse made of some kind of coarse blanket-stuff of a huge cheque pattern, trousers of dirty-white flannel, stuffed into boots that came half-way up his calf. A Turkey-red handkerchief was twisted carelessly round his throat, there being no sign of any shirt beneath; and a bonnet of the Glengarry shape was cocked rather fiercely on his head. In his hand he held a packet of whity-brown paper, made up as it seemed for transmission by post. I could not help seeing that the packet was addressed 'London' in a bold rough hand.

He seemed to wince at the look full of curiosity that I gave him. His face, which had been lighted up with interest in watching the progress of the fishing, now turned dull and dark. He went off at a short shambling trot in the direction of the post-office, and I saw no more of him just then.

I was not long, however, in finding out something about him. His name it seemed was Houlot, and although eccentric, he was inoffensive, and was on the whole rather respected by the townspeople. He was a *savant*—a character, in their eyes, that excused a good deal of moroseness and roughness of manner. He had resided in the neighbourhood for some years, and occupied a single room in a house upon the hill overlooking the town. Here he lived—hermit-fashion—keeping no domestic, buying his own provisions in the market and cooking them himself. His kitchen, however, I was given to understand, was the least important part of his establishment; and the juice of the grape or of the apple, or of the potato haply, distilled into strong waters, formed the chief of his diet. For many weeks at a time he would scarcely stir from his room, only coming out when his bottle of brandy was empty, or on market-days to buy provisions. After this period of seclusion, he would be seen walking about the country with a pipe in his mouth, a thick oaken stick under his arm, and a book in his solitary hand, still morose and unsociable. There was yet a third stage, during which he would haunt the cafés and wine-shops, drinking a good deal, and chatting away with all comers. At these times he was apt to get quarrelsome, and he was known in consequence to be on bad terms with the inspector of police.

I daresay that if I had chosen to apply to the last-named functionary, I should have got still more ample information; but there was nothing to justify me in pushing inquiry any further. It was generally thought that Houlot was English in origin; but his French was not distinguishable as that of a foreigner, and he spoke German as well as he did English.

A week or two afterwards I met Monsieur Houlot walking on the heights overlooking the Seine, with his pipe and stick, and with his nose in a tattered volume. I raised my hat in passing; but he turned his head away with a scowl, and did not return my salute. Decidedly, I said to myself, he is English.

One morning the postman brought me a registered letter containing a remittance from England, and placed before me his book to receive my signature. When I had signed, he handed me a letter; but it was not for me, it was for M. Houlot; and yet, curiously enough, the address was in the handwriting of Mr Smith, the business agent of Collingwood Dawson, from whom I was expecting a remittance.

'Ah, I have given you the wrong letter,' said the postman. 'They are both just alike, and I have made a mistake; pardon, Monsieur;' and he handed me a similar letter addressed to myself.

I noticed that from this date Houlot seemed to assume his third stage of habits—that in which he haunted the cafés and wine-shops. Every one agreed that he was much less inaccessible at such times, and could even make casual acquaintance with strangers. I had a great desire to know more about him, and took a little pains to throw myself in his way. I ascertained that he usually spent his afternoons in one particular café—the *Café Cujus*—thus called from the name of its proprietor; and I made a point of taking coffee there every day at the hour at which he was usually to be met with. But I did not advance my purpose by that. He would bury his head in the *Journal de Rouen*, turn his back persistently upon me, and leave the café at the earliest possible moment.

'You will come and visit us this evening?' said Mademoiselle Cujus graciously to me one day, as I paid my score at the counter of the elegant little platform whence she dispensed her various tinctures. 'We shall have a very genteel concert to-night.'

Mademoiselle is a charming little Frenchwoman, with a piquant retroussé nose, a full and softly rounded chin, and dark eyes with a veiled fire about them, most attractive. She wears the prettiest little boots in the world, and is always charmingly dressed. It is difficult to refuse Mademoiselle Cujus anything, and I undertook to be present at the concert. Admission was free, and thus I did not commit myself to any great outlay.

When I entered the café that evening, I found it well filled with a miscellaneous but respectable company. Everybody is talking, coffee-cups and glasses are clinking, dominoes are rattling. At one end of the room, on an extemporised platform, formed of a few rough boards, the prima-donna, a rather bony lady in a very low dress, stands with a roll of music in her hand, and surveys the company in a somewhat dissatisfied way. She has cleared her throat once or twice, and the pianist bangs out an opening chord or two. Her voice is a little husky—perhaps with the singing of anthems; but she has plenty of confidence and 'go' about her, and the wit to please her audience.

When the rattle of applause that greeted the end of the lady's song had ceased, there followed a comic man dressed as a peasant, carrying a tobacco-pipe, which he was always trying, though ineffectually, to light with a match from his trousers-pocket. He counterfeits the Norman peasant in a state of semi-intoxication excellently well, and his song is much applauded and called for again.

'Yah!' growled a voice behind me in an angry tone; and looking round I saw M. Houlot standing by the doorway, his thick stick under

his arm. He seemed to be a little obscure in his faculties, and to have resented the last performance as a personal insult to himself. His brows were knitted, and his eyes gleamed angrily whilst he grasped the thin end of his stick in a menacing way. Mademoiselle Cujus saw him at the same moment as myself, and descended quickly from her Olympus to appease him, laying her hand upon his arm as if to beg him to retire. He shook it roughly off; and Mademoiselle looked imploringly at me, as being the only one of the company who had noticed this little scene. At the sight of beauty in distress I at once came forward. I took Houlot kindly but firmly by the arm, and led him out into the kitchen at the back, where, among the many brightly shining vessels of tin and copper, we endeavoured to pacify him and explain matters.

No one could possibly withstand the winning ways of Miss Cujus. Houlot was appeased, and went quietly out into the street. I had had enough of the concert, and followed him. He lurched a little in his gait, and every now and then stopped and looked fiercely round at the stars overhead, as if he objected to their winking at him in the manner they did. I accosted him once more, and in English, saying that I understood that he spoke the language perfectly, and would he favour me with his company for half an hour. He made no reply at first, but wrinkled his brows and puckered his lips.

'Come along!' he said at last with a suddenness that startled me. 'Let me have a talk with you, then.'

I occupied a furnished house, with a little pavilion in the garden looking out on the river, which I used as my writing and smoking room; and to this pavilion I took my friend and called for lights and cognac. He seemed restless and disturbed at the idea of being my guest. He would not sit down, but as soon as he had swallowed a glass of brandy he grasped his stick once more to take his departure.

'If you would like any English books,' I said, 'I have some magazines and so on.'

He shook his head. 'I never read English; I have read none for ten years,' he said. 'I like to get things at first-hand; so that if I want to know anything, I go to the Germans; if I want to feel anything, to the French. But what have you here?' taking up a book. It was a volume of Dawson's last novel, which had been sent over to me.

'Hum!' he cried. 'Is this a good author?'

'A popular one,' I replied, modestly remembering the share I had, if not in his fame, at least in his fortunes.

'I'll take this, if you'll let me have it,' he said.

'Take the three volumes.'

'No; I'll only take one. I don't suppose I shall get through the first chapter.'

Next day, however, he came back to borrow the second volume, and the day after the third. I felt a little flattered that a work in which I had taken so good a share had the power to captivate such a dour and sullen soul.

'What do you think of it?' I said, when he brought back the last volume. He was standing leaning against the doorway with his stick under his arm. He would never sit down; he seemed to have made a vow against it.

'Think of it?' he cried. 'Why, it is my own—my own story!'

'Yours!' I said astonished. 'How do you make that out?'

'It is mine! the framework, the skeleton of it. Some fool has been at work upon it and taken out all the beauties of it! The burning fiery dialogue, the magnificent glowing descriptions, all are gone, and in their stead some ass has filled it all up with pulp!'

This was pleasant for me to hear. My blood boiled with indignation, but I was obliged to smother my rage and put on a sickly smile. 'You must be mistaken,' I said. 'How could he possibly have got hold of your story?'

'How? He must have got it from a man named Smith, to whom I sent it. Write? Yes, I have written ever since I was breeched! It is a disease with me; I can't help it. Romances, novels, all that trash!'

'And you send what you write to London?'

Houlot nodded. But he seemed all at once to have repented of his freedom of speech, and took refuge in his usual taciturnity. Then once more hugging his stick, he started off at his usual shambling trot.

THE CAT—ANCIENT AND MODERN.

CRUEL and treacherous, a lover of the night and darkness, the cat, with its distrustful gaze and marked attachment to localities, was very naturally the animal selected, in the middle ages of superstition and witchcraft, to represent the familiar companion, in which was embodied the evil spirit supposed to attend all those who practised the black art in former times. Long before this time, however, as some people are probably aware, the cat was one of the most highly favoured animals living; petted, pampered, carefully protected, and actually worshipped by the then most civilised people in the world, the ancient Egyptians. How this reverence came to be paid to the cat in particular by this extraordinary people it is quite impossible to determine; but by some it is supposed to have originated from the benefits conferred on mankind by its destruction of vermin and reptiles; at anyrate, if the Egyptian cats were as useful as they are represented to have been, the care taken of them is easily accounted for. Though it seems somewhat difficult to understand how the sportsmen of the Nile trained their cats not only to hunt game but to retrieve it from the water, the hunting scenes depicted on walls at Thebes and on a stone now in the British Museum, afford proof of the Egyptian cat's services in this respect. In one of these representations Puss is depicted in the act of seizing a bird that has been brought down by the marksman in the boat; while in the other scene, as the sport has not begun, the cats are seen in the boat ready for their work. Thus it appears from these ancient illustrations of field and other sports, that the Egyptians were able to train their domestic cats to act in the same way as our modern retriever dogs do.

It is generally supposed that nothing will induce

a cat to enter water; but this is clearly a fallacy, like many other popular notions about the animal world. The tiger is an excellent swimmer, as many have found to their cost; and so the cat, another member of the tiger family, can swim equally well if it has any occasion to exert its powers, either in quest of prey, or to effect its escape from some enemy. As cats are exceedingly fond of fish, they will often drag them alive out of their native element whenever they get the chance. They have even been known to help themselves out of aquaria that have been left uncovered; and on moonlight nights they may be seen watching for the unwary occupants of a fish-pond, during the spawning season especially. Again, a cat will take the water in the pursuit of a rat, a fact that was proved by a friend of ours a few years ago. On one occasion being accompanied by one of his pets, a rat was started, which the cat not only pursued, but chased into the water close by, eventually swimming to an island some little distance from the bank, where it remained a short time and then swam back again.

Diana or Pasht, as that goddess was called in Egypt, was the tutelary deity of cats. Various reasons are assigned for this curious selection of the cat as the animal worthy of being dedicated to the moon. We find that according to Plutarch, the cat was not only sacred to the moon, but an emblem of it; and that a figure of a cat was fixed on a sistrum to denote the moon, just as a figure of a frog on a ring denoted a man in embryo. And further, it was supposed that the pupils of a cat's eyes always dilated as the moon got towards the full, and then decreased as the moon waned again. This has been given by some as the reason why cats were held sacred to the goddess Diana.

As before stated, the Egyptians treated these animals with unusual care and attention during their lifetime; hence it is not surprising to find that the death of a cat was regarded as a family misfortune, in consequence of which the household went into mourning. Their regret for the defunct cat was displayed then by the curious custom of shaving off the eyebrows before attending the funeral, which they invariably conducted with great pomp. Previous to interment, the bodies of these pets were embalmed, and then, when it was possible, conveyed to the city of Bubastis, where they were placed in the temples sacred to Pasht.

The wilful destruction of a cat in Egypt is looked upon as a very serious offence even now; but in the good old days (for cats) at Bubastis the offence, even supposing it to have been accidental, was punished with prompt severity. The unfortunate offender, as in the case of a Roman soldier whose story is told by Diodorus, was taken prisoner, tried, condemned, and sentenced—to death. Puss had fine times of it in those early years of superstition and animal worship; but unfortunately for her, other people formed very different notions concerning her character and occu-

pations generally; for in the middle ages cats got the reputation of being the only animals that ill-famed old women could induce to live in their houses; consequently they naturally became associated with witchcraft and all that was diabolical and uncanny by the credulous people of those times. In the Isle of Thanet a carving still exists on one of the *misereres* of the church which represents an ugly old woman sitting in a chair and holding a distaff in her hand, while two cats sit close to her, one of them indeed in the chair itself, looking as if it wished to spring on to her shoulder. It seems, however, that old women did not monopolise the cats even in those days, for it is known that in the thirteenth century one of the rules of the English convents was, that the nuns should keep no other 'beast' but a cat; hence we may infer that cats were looked upon more favourably by the religious orders than by the people generally.

The cat has been connected with many curious superstitions in various parts of the world. In some localities, for instance, it is believed that witches in the shape of cats are in the habit of roaming about the roofs of the houses during the month of February; hence they are promptly shot. In Germany also a similar notion prevails respecting black cats; in consequence of which they are never allowed to go near the cradles of young children; though it is not easy to understand why the young should be more exposed to danger from these supposititious witches than those more advanced in years. But numerous instances might be given of the incredible nonsense that has been believed, and is believed still in some places about the diabolical attributes of the cat, especially a black one. In Sicily, where the cat is looked upon as sacred to St Martha, there is a superstition that any one who wilfully or accidentally kills a cat will be punished by the serious retribution of seven years' unhappiness. So if any credit is attached to this, the life of Puss in Sicily must be as secure from harm as in the palmy days of Egyptian cat-worship. In Hungary there is a curious superstition that before a cat can become a good mouser it must be stolen. The familiar nursery story of Whittington and his Cat, as well as the favourite children's fable of Puss in Boots, can be traced some hundreds of years back.

It is perhaps an unfortunate thing that the habits of cats are not more carefully observed, as it is by no means certain that their peculiarities are fully understood. By some their intelligence is very much underrated, and they are often looked upon as lazy uninteresting animals, only to be tolerated in a house so long as they devote themselves to nocturnal raids against mice or rats, as the case may be. However, they cannot be put on a par with the dog, for as far as present as well as past experience shews, the cat, with certain honourable exceptions, is neither as useful, as faithful, nor as intelligent as our canine friend.

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The dog knows its owner, and will always make itself comfortable in any place that the owner chooses to take it, provided he is there himself. The cat, on the other hand, knows its owner's house and furniture, attaches itself to them, and seldom troubles itself at all about the presence or absence of its owner; hence the great difficulty of removing cats from one home to another. Sometimes they may be induced to take kindly to new quarters, but very rarely. If Puss be taken to a strange house, it will first of all examine and smell every article of furniture in the rooms it is allowed to enter; if it finds the same things that it has been accustomed to, perhaps the discovery may reconcile it to remain; but if all is strange, the creature exhibits symptoms of positive distress, and will even make efforts to return to the old home; and this may perhaps account for the stories told of Egyptian cats rushing back into blazing houses after they had been once brought out of them with difficulty; for it has been gravely asserted that the Egyptian cats preferred to perish with their homes when fires broke out, rather than abandon them.

Some years ago *The Times* gave an account of a remarkable incident, illustrating in a striking way the sagacity and kindness of a dog; the account had appeared in two other newspapers, but we have not the means of verifying it. A cat named Dick was one day enjoying a meal of scraps, when a needle and thread became entangled in his dinner; the poor animal unconsciously partook of these adjuncts, which stuck in his throat. Carlo, a dog on very friendly terms with Dick, observed that something was wrong, hurried up to him, and seemed to receive some kind of communication from him. The dog and the cat became physician and patient. Carlo commenced operations by licking Dick's neck, the cat holding its head a little aside to give Carlo a fair chance. This licking operation continued with short intervals of rest for nearly twenty-four hours, Carlo occasionally pausing to press his tongue against his friend's neck, as if trying to find some sharp-pointed instrument thrust from the inside to the outside. At length Carlo was seen, his whole body quivering with excitement, trying to catch something with his teeth. In this he succeeded. Giving a sudden jerk, he pulled the needle through the hide of the cat, where it hung by the thread which still held it from the inside. A by-stander then finished the surgical operation by drawing out the thread; and Carlo looked as if he were saying: 'See what I did!'

We have just been told of a very remarkable instance of intelligence displayed by a cat belonging to one of our contributors. After having waited in vain outside a rat's hole for the appearance of the occupant, puss hit upon the plan of 'drawing' her prey, by *fetching a piece of meat and placing it near the hole as a bait*, after which she hid behind a box and waited for results. Whether the bait took or not, we are not informed, but the wily scheme deserved success.

For the following instances of affection and sagacity in cats, we are indebted to a lady correspondent.

'Last October,' she says, 'I was staying a few days with a friend in a small country village not many miles from Edinburgh. One morning I was about to leave my bedroom, and had just opened the window, when I saw a large yellow cat wandering about in the grass which surrounded the house. The creature had a timid scared look, as if not much in the habit of associating with human beings. I spoke to it in a tone of encouragement, however; on hearing which it leaped up on the window-sill and began to purr in a friendly way. I told my friend the lady of the house about the cat, when she gave me the following account of it. "This poor animal belonged to my deceased father. It came to our house a very small kitten, and was accustomed from time to time to receive food from my father's hand, with now and then a little caress or kindly word. But my father was not a cat-fancier, and as a general rule did not take any great notice of the creature. About a year and a half ago my father grew seriously ill, and after a few weeks of suffering, died. During his illness the cat went up and down stairs like a distracted creature, refusing food, and mewing again and again in a mournful way. Sometimes it came into the sick-room, and jumped on the bed; but its master was too ill to notice it, and it went away with a disappointed look. When all was over, and the last attentions had been paid to my father, and all was quiet in the death-chamber, the poor cat came in and took up its position on the bed at his feet. From this place nothing would induce the creature to move; and feeling astonished at its fidelity and affection, we let it lie during the day; though strange to say, it manifested a desire to leave the room at night, returning always about nine in the morning, and if the door was shut, mewing till it gained admittance. On the funeral-day, the faithful creature did not seem to understand the absence of its master; it left the room upon the removal of the body; but the first thing we saw when the mourners returned was the poor pussie lying at the door of the chamber. It was long," said the lady in conclusion, "before the affectionate animal recovered its usual sprightliness; and I would not like anything to happen to a creature which has testified such a strong affection for one so dear to me."

Another story is as follows: 'A cousin of mine had a cat which had just brought into the world some fine healthy kittens. According to the usual custom on these occasions, some of the kittens were drowned, while two were retained for the mother to rear. These were kept in a compartment of an old kitchen table or "dresser." This snug retreat had a little door which was kept closed by means of a bolt. One day a young visitor desired to see the kittens, which were accordingly taken to the drawing-room by one of the daughters of the house. During the absence of the kittens, the cat, which had been in the garden, came into the kitchen, and went as usual to repose beside her little ones. She looked into the dresser, and finding no kittens there, "*clashed*" to the door in a rage, and left the kitchen, her tail thick with indignation! This fact was told me by one of the young ladies of the household, who was busy in the kitchen at the time and saw the whole thing. The cat's furious manner of slamming the door resembled so closely

an irate housewife's way of doing so, that my informant was exceedingly amused, and regarded the cat henceforth as a sort of wonder !'

SPECIMENS OF HINDU ENGLISH.

AMONG the great changes which are now passing over our gigantic dependencies in the Indian peninsula, not the least noteworthy is the rapid spread of a knowledge of the English language among the native population. In certain districts of the Madras Presidency, this knowledge of English may almost be said to be extending like wild-fire. The English civil officer riding through a native village will sometimes be greeted with a 'Good-morning, sar,' from a small boy whose sole costume may be a string tied round the waist, and whose English education may have extended no further than a few such interjectional phrases. But among the school-boys, college lads, and a heterogeneous collection of half-taught young men in search of employment, we meet with most extraordinary feats in the use of our language. A well-known story is told of a native clerk who, being detained at home by a boil, wrote to his employer to say that he could not attend his duties 'owing to the suffering caused by one boil as per margin.' And in the margin of his letter was delineated with accuracy the form and appearance of the offending growth !

The following was the amusing though pertinent answer of a student in the University of Madras to a question about earthquakes and volcanic action : 'A month or two ago, says the *Times*, a violent eruption of an unusual kind took place in Peru and Chili in South America ; smokes, flames, and hot melted matter were thrown with great violence on the neighbouring districts from the hollow tops of the volcanic mountains. Thousands of people of all orders and sexes were destroyed. When this was the case an abominable earthquake took its part. Magnificent houses, huge piles, largest trees, splendid temples, different kinds of people with their relatives, and even large mountains were swallowed up and goes on.'

The letters of native applicants for employment are often couched in most comical terms. The writer once received a letter from a clerk who thought he had not received the promotion he deserved. The missive began : 'HONORED SIR—Fathomless is the sea of troubles in which I sail for 1 year.' This mixture of poetic fervour and numerical accuracy is unique of its kind. The following petition speaks for itself ; the style is common enough ; but the writer is glad to say that it is the only instance he has known of such an offer of apostasy as is here disclosed ; the proper names are suppressed : 'The humble petition of — most respectfully sheweth ; I am a Tanjorean [that is, native of Tanjore]. My name is —. My age is 20. I came here to my uncle's house. My uncle is the Police Inspector of —. I want to be a Christian. There are two Police Inspectors are vacant. Please recommend me to be one of these Inspectors. As soon as I received the Inspector's employment, at once you may take me in Christian. There is no a single doubt at all. If you want to see me tell a word to your Head Constable. . . . I heard that you are mild, simplicity, and probity. I don't know to write

more than this to you. Please excuse me if you find any mistakes. Shall ever pray.—I am your most obedient and humble servant, —.'

The next letter was sent by a clever hard-working native clerk who had fallen ill. The signature alone is in his own handwriting, and the letter was probably dictated to a friend. 'MOST HONORED SIR—I have been suffering from severest fever and bile for the last 10 days and I am quite unable to move or to do anything. I lay quite prostrate on my bed senseless (now and then)—continually painting—my sight fails—not a drop of water I drank—no food—and having been under imminent danger day before yesterday, my lucid intervals are very few, dangerous symptoms frequently appear and I am not sure whether I will be able to see the days before me—My case is very doubtful, precarious and dangerous. I therefore most humbly pray that your Honor will be most graciously pleased to grant one month's privilege leave. . . . I beg to remain, —.'

The following petition reads somewhat as though Lord Dundreary had helped to compose it. It is from a pleader or attorney in a petty civil court applying for the post of cashier in a government treasury. Such cashiers have to give security in a considerable sum for the due performance of their duties, and as a precaution against fraud. It is this security (L.500) which is meant by the word 'ball' in the petition. 'MOST HONoured SIR—This application is with great humility presented to your honour by —. The gazette reads that such as have a wish to find themselves suffered to occupy the room of cashier, now in vacancy, should undergo a greatly advanced bail of Rupees 5000. He is appointed a pleader on the 11th D. day 1869, and by the civil judge in character with his petitionally implored request, and he attends since the heresaid down to the present age very punctually indeed his dearly bought post. . . . He is, here he does very hopefully indeed state, ready no matter at any while to give the here-demanded bail, Rs. 5000. Your humble and very punctual petitioner implores your of course very widely diffused charity to point to him his most humbly requested employ, or otherwise, if ever so, any other one not far below it. Your honour's petitioner in requital and in duty bound very closely, will perhaps never add even a second, while to diligence without bending his whole heart to pray to the universal God to take care of and to cherish, your honour together with all your family members for ever and anon. He remains very affectionately truly yours, humble waiter, —.'

The following curious epistle was addressed to an officer holding an important post. It is hardly necessary to add that he was neither Duke nor Lord. It will be observed that the writer does not directly ask for monetary aid to relieve him from his difficulties, but simply his 'Lordship's' protection, and as a relief to his own feelings and troubles. 'MY LORD DUKE—I have the honor to inform to your Lordship's information that I will always obey your Lordship's order ten thousand times do not be angry my Lord Duke upon me. I beg that your Lordship that should excuse my faults it is my duty to get your Lordship's favor ten thousand times excuse my all faults my Lord Duke. I am much fearfull I am very poor men my poor family requires to your Lordship's favor. My family is

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very poor family. I got a Mother Grandmother Daughterinlaw and my family &c. I had a debt twenty-five thousand Rupees. I am suffering much trouble for debtors. I believe that you are my father and mother for my part only I want your Lordship's kind favour. If your Lordships be angry or even little angry immediately I and my family must die at once, certainly it is my opinion I have no protector but your Lordship. If your Lordships angry I must die at once. I am much fearfull. If I had your Lordship's favor It is quite enough for me. You are Governor I am poor men. If your Lordship be angry upon me it is quite my misfortune and my family therefore do not be angry. This is not Government memorial. I thought that your Lordship is my father and mother for my part therefore I have written all my poor affairs to your gracious informations. Hereafter I never write any letter to your Lordship nor I did not require any answer. only remember me with kindness it is ten thousand profits for me. excuse the trouble I have given your Lordships most valuable time. I have, &c. . . . P.S. I beg your Lordship will continue your favor towards me and my family. Protect my Lord Duke. This is not memorial only for your Lordships Gracious information. Protect me my Lord. This is First Mistake. Excuse me my Lord, hereafter I never do any mistakes. I remain, &c. —'

Some years ago a great flood carried away a fine bridge over the river Tambrapurni, near the chief town of the province of Tinnevely. This bridge had been built some thirty years before by a rich native gentleman named Sulochana Mudaliar, to whom a memorial was erected at one of the approaches to the bridge. The magistrate and collector—as the ruler of the province is termed—by dint of great exertions raised in subscriptions about seven thousand pounds; a sum sufficient to pay for the restoration of the bridge. When the work was at last completed, a grand opening ceremony took place, which gave occasion for a number of poetic effusions in Tamil and in English by native aspirants. The translation from the Tamil is the work of a native, and the following is the reply of a great feudal landholder, who had been invited to attend the opening ceremony: 'MY DEAR SIR—I received your affectionate ticket wanting my company on the occasion of the reopening of Sulochana Mudaliar's bridge on the 2d December. I was quite pleased to come down for the occasion but I regret to inform you that I and — are prevented from coming from being a little sick. You will I humbly trust possibly forgive me.—I beg to remain, Sir, Yours most obediently, —'

Extract from a translation of a Tamil poem :

Who is to judge of the might of Mr —. He and Messrs — and — of the eminent Tinnevely District have had the pleasure of constructing the bridge so as to be praised by the world and allowed the people to pass over it freely. May they live for ever.

The bridge fell down in the evening of Sunday, 18th November 1869. By the noise of which I swooned away and trouble came also.

How can I describe your pains O Mr —. You worked as diligently at the words of Mr — as the swinging of a swing and constructed the bridge with success and very soon and completed it within the fixed time. You beauty! . . .

I have sung upon you in my adversity and hunger. I pray you eminent men to place your mercy upon me at your pleasure.

While you are all occupying this eminent world with great fame, I undergo troubles like bees that tumbled down in honey. What can I do. Cause some employment to be given me without failure through the hand of — with certainty.

We will conclude with a specimen of female composition in the form of a letter sent home by a good old nurse or ayah named Martha, who had accompanied her employers to England in charge of a baby, and who had then been sent back to her native village in India. Both in its sentiment and diction the missive is extremely touching.

'To the Presens of — and — most Respected and Honored sheweth The under Signed your Honor's obediend The Mortha Ayah with due Respectfully Begs to in form you about my considerations which I hope will meet of your honor's kideest approvall. Respected Master and Misterns I and my Relations are all well By thanks of God and Faver of your Honor's while in this Time I hope you will be all right By thanks of All mighty's. This Poor and Obediend servend wrote a letter to your honor when I came to — I hope you may Receive it, I am doing Nothing Since I left you by the Reason of no any Respected Place to work. here is great Chalaras in this year and all so Greatest Famine. 3 mesures of Rice per a Rupee [between three and four times the usual price]. I hope Dear Baby will speak and Walk at this Time I am very angshes to see her and I lovely Thousan kisses to the Dear Baby, Respected Madam will you kindly send me the Picture of the Baby's to keep with me as you Promist me. I humbly begs you to say my meny Thanks to the Mr and Mrs — and the childrens of them. Please tell my thanks to Miss Lysa and Miss Looois [servants Eliza and Louise]. I hope I can see you very soon Back in this Place. Therefore I humbly Begs to Remain Most Honored Madam and Sir Yours truely most obediend servent Mortha Ayah. Misis — she looking to get me a Employment anywhere. They are all well. The Dobin [a favourite horse called Dobbin] he all right. Madam That this Poor widdowe was Very much hapy at the Lost Year By your Exalend honor's kindness. But this new year I pased very miserably.'

CURIOUS CASES OF SLEEP-WALKING.

On the above curious subject a retired naval officer obligingly sends us the following notes.

One bright moonlight night I was on deck, as was frequently my wont, chatting with the lieutenant of the middle watch. It was nearly calm, the ship making little way through the water, and the moon's light nearly as bright as day. We were together leaning over the capstan, chatting away, when W— suddenly exclaimed: 'Look! H—, at that sentry,' and pointing to the quarter-deck marine who was pacing slowly backwards and forwards on the lee-side of the deck.

'Well,' I replied, after watching him somewhat inattentively as he passed once or twice on his regular beat, 'what of him?'

'Why, don't you see he is fast asleep? Take a good look at him when he next passes.'

I did so, and found W—— was right. The man, although pacing and turning regularly at the usual distance, was fast asleep with his eyes closed.

When next the man passed, W—— stepped quickly and noiselessly to his side, and pacing with him, gently disengaged the bunch of keys which were his special charge—being the keys of the spirit-room, shell-rooms, store-rooms, &c.—from the fingers of his left hand, to which they were suspended by a small chain; he then removed the bayonet from his other hand, and laid it and the keys on the capstan head. After letting him take another turn or two, W—— suddenly called 'Sentry!'

'Sir?' replied the man, instantly stopping and facing round as he came to the 'attention.'

'Why, you were fast asleep, sentry.'

'No, sir.'

'But I say you were.'

'No, sir. I assure you I was not.'

'You were not, eh? Well, where are the keys?' The man instantly brought up his hand to shew them, as he supposed; but to his confusion the hand was empty.

'Where is your bayonet?' continued W——.

The poor fellow brought forward his other hand, but that was empty also. But the puzzled look of astonishment he put on was more than we could stand; both burst out laughing; and when the keys and bayonet were pointed out to him lying on the capstan, the poor fellow was perfectly dumfounded. W—— was too merry over the joke, however, to punish the man, and he escaped with a warning not to fall asleep again.

Sentries and look-outs must be very liable to fall asleep from the very nature of their monotonous pacing, and this may in some degree account for the facility with which sentries have at times been surprised and secured before they could give an alarm. In this instance, the most curious fact, I think, was the regularity with which the man continued to pace his distances and turn at the right moment. I have known other instances of sentries and others walking in their sleep, though the end has not always been so pleasant to the victims. In one case, the quarter-deck sentry, in the middle of the night, crashed down the ward-room hatchway with musket and fixed bayonet, with a rattling that startled us all out of our cabins. The fellow fell on his back upon the top of the mess-table, but not much the worse for his exploit. On another occasion a messenger boy paid us a visit in the night: he fell upon a chair, which he smashed to pieces, but the sleeper escaped unhurt.

These can hardly be considered true cases of somnambulism, but shew how men may continue their occupations when overcome by sleep. Nothing but seeing his bayonet and the keys lying on the capstan could have ever convinced the marine that he had been sleeping; no mere assertion to that effect would ever have influenced him.

POURING OIL ON THE TROUBLED WATERS.

The idea expressed in the above heading, though commonly held to be of sacred origin, or as merely a poetical manner of expressing a commonplace occurrence, may nevertheless be taken literally

as well as figuratively, it being, as a matter of fact, a saying which has satisfactory groundwork in natural facts. It was recently stated in evidence before the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Herring Fisheries of Scotland, that the practice of pouring a quantity of oil from a boat on to the surface of the sea during heavy weather had the immediate effect of calming the waters and relieving the boat from the danger of heavy broken water. 'But,' added one of the witnesses, 'although the oil has this effect for a time, the sea becomes rougher afterwards, and so the advantage of adopting the plan is practically not very great.' It is more than probable that this latter statement can be explained by the law of comparisons. The oil cast out on the weather-side of the boat effectually assuages the violence of the waves, which instead of breaking over it, glide smoothly under it. Presently the film of oil becomes dispersed, and the waves, again unchecked, appear, by comparison with the late calm, to be still more formidable. A fresh dose of oil would, however, again prove advantageous, but the experiment is seldom repeated, and so the efficacy of the remedy is called into question. The best way of adopting it is to throw overboard a barrel or skin filled with oil, and pierced in two places, to allow of the gradual escape of the contents. This reservoir should be secured by a rope, and kept on the weather-side of the boat, and renewed as often as necessary. The plan is frequently adopted, with the best results, by native boatmen in the Persian Gulf and in parts of the Indian Ocean, where sudden squalls are apt to spring up.

LOVE UNSUNG.

GLIDE on, sweet purling stream,
And mingle with the sea;
Adown each glen thy waters gleam,
In merry dance and free.
Sing on, sweet bird; the blue expanse
Of heaven's vault is thine;
O lap thy soul into a trance;
Pour forth thy song divine;
But I must not give forth my strain;
I love a maid, but love in vain.

The blithesome bird that haunts the vale
Will bear but half her grief;
She floats her sorrow on the gale,
And gives her soul relief;
The meanest floweret on the field
Basks in the noonday sun;
And every creature hath a rest,
When daily toil is done;
I to myself make bootless moan,
And bear my burden all alone.

A grief that links two hearts in bliss,
Is but a hidden treasure;
What's but a thorn when singly borne,
When shared becomes a pleasure;
The finer feelings of the soul
Are known by mutual union;
Each spirit hath its counterpart,
With whom to hold communion;
But she is gone, and leaves with me
The rest of the unsleeping sea.

E. P.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.